

Sunset Review Process Allows for the Regular Evaluation of DCA Boards and Bureaus

The sunset review process provides an opportunity to conduct a regular systematic performance review and evaluation of DCA boards and bureaus. As mandated by SB 2036 (McCorquodale, Chapter 908, Statutes of 1994), the sunset review process provides a formal mechanism for the Legislature, the boards and bureaus, interested parties and stakeholders, and the Department to make advisory recommendations for board and bureau improvements on a standard four-year cycle.

The Department has a significant role in the sunset review process. Specifically, the sunset law mandates the following four distinct duties that require the Department to:

- Provide assistance to the boards and bureaus in preparing their sunset reports
- Provide testimony at the annual sunset hearings
- Review the Joint Committee's findings and recommendations
- Report its own findings and recommendations to the Joint Committee

Consistent with the Consumer Affairs Act and the sunset review law, the sunset review process provides the appropriate forum for the Legislature, the boards and bureaus, interested parties and stakeholders, and the Department to facilitate needed changes.

Sunset Review Focuses on Application Processing and Complaint Handling

The goal of the sunset review process is to improve the quality of services provided to consumers by thoroughly examining a board's operations, including application processing and complaint handling. Specifically, the Legislature, the boards and bureaus, interested parties and stakeholders, and the Department have used the process, which includes an initial review and on-going re-review, to:

- Ensure that the public's complaints are handled in a courteous and expeditious manner
- Ensure the public is informed about any complaints, disciplinary actions, judgments and criminal actions against a licensed professional
- Establish appropriate performance measures for each board reviewed

Every Aspect of a Board's Operation is Reviewed and Monitored

A questionnaire that asks over 300 questions initiates the sunset review process for each board and bureau. Highlights of specific evaluative questions regarding applications processing, complaint handling, and operational systems include:

- Has the board/bureau specified its vision, mission and goals and objectives for its agency?
- Has the board/bureau been involved in strategic planning, any type of basic self-assessment quality management practices, or reorganization to improve the board's overall effectiveness and efficiency?
- Are there any undue delays in approving an application, providing an exam, or in issuing a license?
- Does the consumer have access to application and licensing information?
- Are complaints handled in both an expeditious and appropriate manner, either through informal or formal processes? Is there any reduction in complaint handling timeframes, or have timeframes increased?
- Is complaint information disclosed to the public?
- How many investigations have been commenced and completed for each year over the past four years, and how many are currently open/pending? What has been the timeframe for these investigations? Has there been a backlog or reductions of outstanding investigation cases?
- Are investigations, inspections and/or audits handled in both an expeditious and appropriate manner by the board/bureau, either through use of their own investigative staff or use of the Department's Division of Investigation? How accurate are the initial and subsequent decisions on investigations?
- Have there been any extreme delays in handling of disciplinary cases over the past four years, which have been referred to the Attorney General's Office for prosecution, and to the Office of Administrative Hearings for a final disposition?
- What disciplinary information is disclosed to the public?

In addition, the initial round of sunset review includes a Consumer Satisfaction Survey, which asks each board and bureau to assess what percentage of consumers are satisfied with the way in which the board handled their complaints.

Review Schedule for the Joint Legislative Sunset Review Committee For Next Four Years – 2006 through 2010

2006/2007 Review	2007/2008 Review	2008/2009 Review	2009/2010 Review
(1) Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau (2) Medical Board of California (3) Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Board (4) Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians, Board of	(1) Acupuncture Board (2) Behavioral Sciences, Board of (3) Court Reporters Board (4) Dental Board of California (5) Dental Auxiliaries, Committee on (6) Geologists and Geophysicists, Board of (7) Psychology, Board of	(1) Contractors State License Board (2) Naturopathic Medicine, Bureau of (3) Optometry, Board of (4) Pharmacy, Board of (5) Podiatric Medicine, Board of (6) Registered Nursing, Board of (7) Respiratory Care Board	(1) Accountancy, Board of (2) Architects Board of California (3) Engineers and Land Surveyors, Board of Professional (4) Guide Dogs for the Blind, Board of (5) Landscape Architects Technical Committee (6) Physician Assistant Committee (7) Structural Pest Control Board (8) Veterinary Medical Board and Registered Veterinary Technician Examining Committee